

Colbr - ~~Wetland~~ inc. h. 100'

Drum 20

71,200,085 04872

2004/08



Curios and Relics

Clothing

Collar – Assassination

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Lincoln's Last Laugh.

(New York Asylum.)

Mr. George Van Duzer, of this city, has presented to the Grand Library a portion of the collar worn by Abraham Lincoln at the time of his assassination. Mr. Van Duzer was present at Ford's Theatre on that fatal night, and relates the following incident:

The army under Gen. Lee having surrendered to Gen. Grant a few days previously, Secretary Stanton, on the 13th of April, 1865, telegraphed to Gov. John A. Dix to stop the draft, as it was considered that the war was virtually over.

At Ford's Theatre, Washington, D. C., on the evening of April 14, 1865, the play of "Our American Cousin" was being enacted. In the scene, just before the fatal shot of the assassin, a garden settee was standing on the stage opposite the President's box. Mary Moredith (one of the characters of the play), followed by Lord Dundreary (with her shawl thrown over his arm), came upon the stage, and the lady took a seat upon the settee. Glancing over first one shoulder and then the other, she exclaimed:

"My Lord, will you please be so kind as to throw that shawl over my shoulders? There appears to be such a draft here."

Lord Dundreary immediately replied:

"You are mistaken, Miss Mary— there is no draft. The draft is all over."

The President instantly saw the point and laughed very heartily, as did the entire audience, who arose and cheered. In a few moments more the assassin had done his work, and a nation was in tears.

3-11-1888

Feb 7, 1946

Dr. Louis A. Warren
Director, Lincoln Nat. Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dear Sir:

Seeing in the Washington papers that you are to address the Lincoln Group of Washington on Sunday next, I am taking the liberty of addressing you in regard to a Lincoln relic which may be of interest to you.

I own a portion (half) of the collar worn by President Lincoln the night on which he was assassinated. The authenticity of this is borne out by a diary kept by Newton Ferree (my husband's father) who found it in the President's box shortly after Mr. Lincoln was carried from the theatre, and also by two newspaper clippings I have.

Mr. Ferree during his lifetime told the story a little more fully than related in his diary. He was not in the theatre at the time of the shooting, but entered during the general confusion which followed, leaving shortly afterwards. On leaving he was accosted by a friend who had helped carry Mr. Lincoln from the theatre. I do not remember the name of this man, but he asked Mr. Ferree to

return with him into the theatre to help him find his keys which he thought he must have dropped while aiding the President. They were joined by a Mr. Kent, also a friend of Mr. Ferree, and the three men entered the theatre which was now entirely emptied and darkened. In groping around on hands and knees on the bloody floor of the box to find the keys, Mr. Kent picked up the pistol (or revolver) used by Booth and Mr. Ferree found the collar which had been torn from the President's neck. While discussing the collar, a fourth man, stranger to them all, appeared and asked to see the collar. Being bloody, Mr. Ferree had wrapped the collar in a program. This he handed to the man who appeared to inspect it, but in the darkness of the theatre, Mr. Ferree did not know that the man had cut off and kept nearly half of the collar until he returned to his rooms and made the little package.

Mr. Kent was called upon to identify the weapon at the trial.

Some years later, someone sent Mr. Ferree a newspaper clipping which stated that a Mr. ^{Van Duzen} ~~Dusenbury~~ of New York had presented to the Masonic Library a portion of the collar worn by Mr. Lincoln on the night he was

shot. I presume the library meant was the Masonic Library in Philadelphia, tho I do not know the date of the newspaper or the city in which it was published. The clipping is in the diary, as is also a small clipping stating that on one occasion Mr. Ferree had exhibited his portion of the collar.

These two portions should prove each other - except a small piece would be lacking (about an inch perhaps) which was given by Mr. Ferree to his brother, making Mr. Ferree's portion exactly one-half of the collar.

I do not know why Mr. Ferree in his diary did not mention the two men with him when he entered the box. Perhaps it was lack of space, or it may be that these details seemed unimportant in the face of this awful tragedy. He does, however, mention at a later date in his diary that Mr. Kent had been summoned to testify.

In relating this, I hope I have not made any misstatements. Mr. Newton Ferree has been dead many years and my husband, whose memory would be better than mine, is dead also. The Ferree family valued this as a precious souvenir of a very sad occasion and had no thought of publicity in its ownership, nor did they ever think of parting with it. As my days

are possibly numbered, I feel that something should be done about it. I have been told that no other clothing worn by Mr. Lincoln on that night was saved. I regret very much that my circumstances do not permit me making a gift of it to some institution and, in the belief that you would be as interested in this very intimate relic of Mr. Lincoln as I, I am asking your opinion and advice in the matter - as to how and where to dispose of it best and the value I should place upon it. I feel there are many collectors of Lincolniana who might be very glad to add this to their collections.

I also have a small Brady photograph of Mr. Lincoln taken about that time and one of John Wilkes Booth, an autograph of Mr. Lincoln (Abraham written in full) and a large steel engraving by Guglio from Marshfield's painting. My engraving is marked "working proof" and is signed by Mr. Guglio "In remembrance to my friend Chas. W. Wernmehl". The collar and diary I have loaned the museum for exhibit on Sunday, and, should you desire, you may inspect it there.

Thanking you in advance for your reply and any advice you may give me, I am

Mrs. D. Lyndan Ferree
4806 Lehigh Street
Chesapeake, Md.

Respectfully yours
Anna C. Ferree

February 14, 1946

Dr. Louis A. Warren
Director, Lincoln Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren:

In my letter to you of Feb. 7th, concerning the collar worn by Abraham Lincoln when he was assassinated, I did (as I feared I might) make some misstatements which I hasten to correct.

On sending my son to the Archives Building today to read Mr. Kent's testimony, I learned the following - and I quote Mr. Kent's testimony in identifying the pistol:

(Question) "How long after the Pres. was shot did you pick it up?"

(Mr. Kent) "I do not know exactly how long. About three minutes after the Pres. was shot I went into the box. There were two other persons there, and a surgeon, apparently, asked me for a knife to cut open the Pres. clothes. I handed him mine and with it he cut the Pres. clothes open. I then went down to call my room mate and I missed my night key. I hurried back to the theatre and when I went into the box and was searching

around for it on the floor, I knocked my foot against the pistol and, stooping down, I picked it up and cried out: "I have found the pistol!" Some persons told me to give it to the police, but a gentleman representing himself as the agent of the Associated Press, came to me and told me that he was the agent of the Associated Press and I handed it to him and gave him my name at the time. The next morning I went around to the police station and identified it there."

(Question) "You recognize the pistol as the same?"

(Mr. Kent) "Yes, Sir."

So I will have to correct my story, tho in the end the main facts remain as told.

A key was lost by a friend of Mr. Ferrer while aiding the President, and it was to find this key that Mr. Ferrer returned to the theatre with this friend. While looking for the key, the friend Mr. Kent, found the pistol and Mr. Ferrer found the collar. I am still under the impression that a third man was with them, tho I do not know his name. I had hoped that

Mr. Kent might have mentioned Mr. Ferree by name in his testimony, but I can see that this was irrelevant. He does not even mention Mr. Seward, who, I have always believed was in the box with the President and was stabbed. It was his blood mostly on the floor of the box I had thought.

I regret and apologize for my inaccuracies. I have heard Mr. Ferree tell the story several times and, tho. he never varied it in the telling, I perhaps did not listen as closely as I would have had I known I would have to repeat it years later. However, I can see nothing in this testimony to disprove the authenticity of the collar and its finding, and I feel I might be forgiven for letting my imagination fill in the gaps in the story, considering it is eighty years since the happening and I was not there (or even born) at the time.

I have written several Grand Lodge Libraries since writing you in the hope of locating the other portion of the collar. Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, Boston and Alexandria, Va.

So far I have only received a reply from the librarian at Philadelphia, who states the collar is not in his library.

Thanking you for your interest in the matter and for your very courteous treatment of my daughter-in-law, I am

Respectfully yours
Anna C. Ferree

Mrs. Sheridan Ferree
4006 Beland Street
Chevy Chase - 15 - Md.

I regret my inability to have my letters typed for your easier reading. I am an invalid, my eyesight is poor and writing quite difficult. I hope you do not have great trouble reading them.

A.C.F.

collar

April 4, 1946

Mrs. Sheridan Ferree
4006 Island Street
Chevy Chase, Md.

My dear Madam:

I trust you will not feel I am discourteous in not replying to your letters of February 7 and February 14 long before this. The fact is I have been out of my office nearly all of the time since the Washington engagement and have had very very little opportunity to give your proposition any consideration.

We have never been very much interested in curios here and for that reason I rather hesitate to make any offer for the interesting item which you have in your possession. It seems to me that you do have it quite well authenticated and while in Philadelphia, I made some little effort to try and discover the other half of the collar which is said to be in the GAR Museum there but was unsuccessful in my quest.

May I inform you again that we are very much interested in the little curio you have but I do not think we would care to acquire it.

Very truly yours,

Director

LAW:CRS
L.A. Warren

THE EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

HOME OFFICE NEW YORK, N.Y.

THOMAS I. PARKINSON, PRESIDENT

MARY E. HOFFMAN, REPRESENTATIVE
17TH FLOOR, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK BLDG.
10TH AND GRAND AVENUE
KANSAS CITY 6, MO.

KANSAS CITY, MO.,
January 19, 1948

Louis A. Warren, Litt. D.
Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

My Dear Dr. Warren:

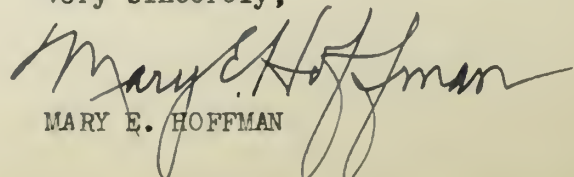
In compliance with your request at the Advertising & Sales Executives luncheon at Kansas City today, I am glad to give you in writing the little story about the half of Lincoln's collar which my father secured at the time of Mr. Lincoln's assassination.

To give you a little background which might possibly be of some assistance in case you should by any remote chance run across the trail of this Lincoln memento, I will begin with a bit of family history. My grandfather, Ripley Christian Hoffman was a lawyer in Jackson, Ohio, well known throughout the State because of his ability as a public speaker. The Governor of the State frequently called upon him during the Civil War years to go on speaking tours for the purpose of securing recruits for the Union army. When my grandfather was away from home on one such speaking trip, my father, a seventeen college student, took advantage of his absence to enlist, shortly before the end of the war. This enlistment seems to have permanently interrupted his college course, and when the war was over, at about the age of 18 I believe, my father secured a position as clerk in the War department in Washington.

He and his roommate (by the name of Isham I believe -- if I have spelled it right) were in their rooming house across from the Ford Theatre on the night of Lincoln's assassination. They heard the shots, or at least the commotion and ran across to the Ford Theatre, some way or other getting up onto the stage where Mr. Lincoln had been stretched out. Mr. Lincoln's collar had been removed and Isham cut it in two, so that each might have a half. I have heard my father say that he sent his half home for safer keeping and that it had always been a mystery to him what had become of it. It is a matter of considerable surprise to me that apparently it became lost, because my grandfather was a person who kept souvenirs or anything of historical interest which came his way, as attested by the contents of the "strong box" now in my possession in which he had accumulated many such mementoes. The most logical explanation which has occurred to me is that a servant may sometime have thrown it out, thinking that half of a collar was only a bit of rubbish!

If this little account of this incident is of any help to a worthy competitor, I shall be happy to have been of this small service!!!

Very sincerely,


MARY E. HOFFMAN

MEH:IM

3
February 3, 1948

Miss Mary M. Hoffman
The Equitable Life Assurance Society
17th Floor, Federal Reserve Bank Bldg.
10th & Grand Ave.
Kansas City, 6, Missouri:

Dear Miss Hoffman:

I wish to thank you for the story of the half of Lincoln's collar which you have sent to Dr. Warren. It is a most interesting and unique piece of information.

Dr. Warren is expected back from his speaking itinerary around March 15th and I will call his attention to your letter immediately upon his return.

Very truly yours,

Margaret Moellering
Secretary to Dr. Warren

March 24, 1948

Miss Mary E. Hoffman
The Equitable Life Assurance Society
17th Floor, Federal Reserve Bank Building
Tenth and Grand Avenue
Kansas City, 6, Missouri

My dear Miss Hoffman:

Just back at my desk I am attempting to bring up to date some of the correspondence which has accumulated, during my absence.

Your letter now before me recalls the very interesting incident relating to the Lincoln collar, which your father secured at the time of Mr. Lincoln's assassination. I am sure that you will want to get in touch with Mrs. Sheridan Ferree, 4006 Leland Street, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

I think that you will find that your grandfather's roommate was named Ferree, and inasmuch as you will want to correspond with the family, I will not go into further details with respect to the disposition of the lost half of the collar. The other half is now in possession of the Ferree family.

I hope that you will have an interesting correspondence with the Ferree family.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

4827 43 Place Mc
Washington 16 DC
August 1st 1952

Dear Doctor Louis A. Warten

- (A) Will you please give me the name and address of the woman in Kansas City who has the other half of Lincoln's Collar worn by him when assassinated?

I read somewhere, now I cannot relocate the item, that when Mrs T. (not FDR) Roosevelt began cleaning out and cleaning up she sent out to public auction "the rat trap that caught the rat that ate Mr Lincoln's ~~clo~~ suit". I cannot recall what book I read it in - Have you ever come across that?

c Where Can we find data on the
English Hornbeam tree planted by AL?
any idea? I am about as out
of persons + places to inquire of.

Respectfully + Cordially

P.S. Roy Hays is in Howell Michigan
with Mich Mutual Auto Insurance.
Tom Starr is Back home worse than
ever before; after 9 months in the
Multiple Sclerosis Clinic at Venice
Florida

Best Saloon

COLLAR

August 14, 1952

Mr. Bert Sheldon
4827 - 43rd Place, N. W.
Washington 16, D. C.

Dear Bert:

Thanks very much for sending the picture. It is new to me but I cannot identify the place where it was taken. I will let you know if I am successful in doing so.

You will please find attached to this letter a photostatic copy of some correspondence I received from Mary E. Hoffman which I think sets forth her side of the collar story.

Very truly yours,

LAW:PE

Director

P.S. I do not recall having heard the rat trap story and the very nature of it proves it was a hoax.

Dear Mr. [Name] -

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Wm. [Name]
[Address]
[City, State]

Dear Sir:

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

Yours truly,

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.

I have just received your letter of the 12th inst. and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same.



